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PP RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHLH RUEHPW
DE RUEHEK #1052/01 2900928
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 160928Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY BISHKEK
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1450
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 2711
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1074
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3098
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2484
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 001052

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SCA/CEN (GORKOWSKI)

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: KYRGYZ LOCAL ELECTIONS FOLLOW A FAMILIAR PATH

REF: A. A. BISHKEK 897

[1](#)B. B. BISHKEK 970

[1](#)C. C. 07 BISHKEK 1516

[1](#)D. D. BISHKEK 1017

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Based on an Embassy review of available results from the October 5 local elections, it appears that pro-presidential Ak Jol loyalists have swept the Bishkek City Council. The Central Election Commission's refusal to accredit any international observers meant that Embassy teams were limited to observing from outside polling stations. Although Embassy has not reviewed results from races outside of Bishkek, local NGOs have complained of ballot stuffing, observer intimidation, bribing voters, and various other forms of electoral manipulation. These elections were the last major contest before the 2010 presidential elections, and, with an apparent Ak Jol sweep of the Bishkek City Council, have eliminated another possible venue for mainstream opposition parties to challenge Ak Jol political dominance. END SUMMARY.

A Bishkek Sweep for Ak Jol?

[1](#)2. (C) Over 15,000 candidates competed for 7,600 seats in local elections held October 5 throughout Kyrgyzstan. While we have not reviewed results from areas outside of Bishkek, self-nominated candidates appear to have swept the majority of Bishkek's 44 local council seats. More than 500 people, including 105 registered members of political parties, competed for the 44 slots. President Bakiyev's earlier announcement that Ak Jol would not submit a party list, in an effort to avoid politicizing the election (see reftels A and B), generated the sizable number of nominally unaffiliated candidates. This step makes it harder to tally the breadth of Ak Jol's victory. In the case of Bishkek, however, our review of the victors' slate indicates that most successful candidates have Ak Jol loyalties. But, it appears that at

least two, minor non-parliamentary parties each gained a seat.

No Peeking

13. (C) For the first time in memory, the Central Election Commission (CEC) refused to accredit any international observers, turning down requests from the Embassy, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems. The CEC notified the Embassy three days before the election that the registration period for foreign observers had ended the previous day. The CEC shifted blame on to the Embassy for having requested accreditation, and not an invitation to be accredited. This logic apparently was also used in denying accreditation to other foreign observers.

Irregularities on Display

14. (C) On election day, the Embassy sent out five observation teams around Bishkek, and two teams to the neighboring towns of Tokmok and Kara Balta. Due to the lack of accreditation, our teams could only observe the election process from outside the polling stations. Nevertheless, our teams spotted some irregularities. Two Bishkek teams witnessed ballot boxes being carried away without any retinue of vigilant observers, and two other teams saw plain clothes police agents inside the polling stations. Another team talked to an NGO observer who complained of people outside the district being allowed to vote. Turnout numbers for Chui Oblast, where Tokmok and Kara Balta are located, appeared

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excessively high at 71.8%.

Vote Early, Vote Often

15. (C) At an October 6 press conference, NGO observers reported wide-scale evidence of fraud. While the fraud appeared to be somewhat less organized than during the December parliamentary elections -- there were no wide-scale power outages just as the ballots were being counted, for example -- the observers reported numerous instances of ballot stuffing, bribing and bussing of voters, repeat voting, and falsification of polling station tabulations. (See reftel C.) They also reported that the CEC had so far refused to release the polling station-level tabulation of votes, as required by the election code. The NGO coalition, largely trained by the National Democratic Institute, announced that they would appeal the conduct of the elections in court.

Comment

16. (C) Despite the late September resignation of the CEC chair (reftel D) amidst claims of threats from President Bakiyev's son, the disappearance of an opposition parliamentarian and the disappearance of another parliamentarian's son, the October 5 local elections were relatively peaceful. Although local observers detected violations in the elections, the CEC and the courts are not expected to overturn the results. These elections were a convenient practice run, without foreign observers, before the next major electoral contest, the 2010 presidential election. If, as it appears, pro-presidential Ak Jol loyalists have secured the Bishkek City Council, and given the minimal opposition presence in the Kyrgyz national parliament, the opposition now lacks one more prominent venue from which to challenge Ak Jol dominance of the country.

GFOELLER